

## Message Text

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SUBJ: FINAL EXCHANGES ON NEW CONSTITUTION DRAW POLITICAL FIRE

REF ATHENS 4220

1. SUMMARY. FINAL GOG STATEMENTS IN PARLIAMENT BEFORE VOTING JUNE 7 ON NEW CONSTITUTION WERE CAPPED BY PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS' EMPHATIC SPEECH WHEN HE LABELLED NEW CHARTER AS LIBERAL, DEMOCRATIC AND PROGRESSIVE DOCUMENT AND SCORED OPPOSITION AS IRRESPONSIBLE AND ANTI-DEMOCRATIC FOR ITS BOYCOTT OF THE FINAL VOTE. OPPOSITION LEADERS REPLIED BY CRITICIZING CERTAIN ARTICLES OF THE CONSTITUTION, SPECIFICALLY THOSE WHICH ALLEGEDLY GIVE DISPROPORTIONATE AUTHORITY TO THE EXECUTIVE, AND THE GOG'S STEAM ROLLER TACTICS. MAVROS (CU/NF) AND PAPANDREOU (PASOK) PLEDGED CAMPAIGN TO ENLIGHTEN PUBLIC ON DEFECTS OF CONSTITUTION AND TO PROPOSE REVISIONS. EDITORIAL COMMENT SUPPORTED IN GENERAL NEW CHARTER, SEVERAL PAPERS CRITICIZING THE OPPOSITION'S ABSTENTION, WHILE LIBERAL TO VIMA POINTEDLY AVOIDED TAKING SIDES. OVERALL PUBLIC REACTION TO HEATED EXCHANGES WAS THAT POLITICIANS WERE AT THEIR USUAL BACKBITING WAYS WHEN ISSUE OF SUCH IMPORTANCE SHOULD HAVE DEMANDED NATIONAL UNITY AND ACROSS-THE-BOARD PARLIAMENTARY COOPERATION. END SUMMARY.

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2. FINAL VOTING JUNE 7 ON NEW CONSTITUTION REPRESENTED COM-

PLETE SUPPORT FROM ALL NEW DEMOCRACY DEPUTIES PRESENT (OF 216 ND DEPUTIES, 208 WERE PRESENT AND VOTED IN FAVOR) WITH TOTAL BOYCOTT BY OPPOSITION PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO ARE CHARGING THAT NEW CHARTER IS PARTISAN PRODUCT OF NEW DEMOCRACY AND DOES NOT REFLECT NATIONAL REPRESENTATION. CARAMANLIS EXPECTEDLY WAS RANKLED SOMEWHAT BY THE OPPOSITION'S PERSISTENCE IN BOYCOTTING THE FINAL VOTING OF THE ENTIRE NEW CONSTITUTION PARTICULARLY SO SINCE THE OPPOSITION HAD PARTICIPATED IN THE PRELIMINARY WORK IN PREPARING THE DOCUMENT AND VOTED APPROVAL ON NEARLY ALL OF THE 120 ARTICLES.

3. PM CARAMANLIS' LANGUAGE IN LASHING OUT AT THE OPPOSITION WAS CHARACTERISTICALLY STRAIGHTFORWARD. (HE SPOKE AT LENGTH EXTEMPORANEOUSLY AND, AS USUAL, WITHOUT NOTES.) AFTER A FEW INTRODUCTORY REMARKS LAUDING THE NEW CHARTER WHICH COMPLETES INSTITUTIONALLY THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY, CARAMANLIS BLASTED THE OPPOSITION WHOSE ABSTENTION HE SAID ONLY INFLECTS DAMAGE ON THE REPUBLIC BY JEOPARDIZING THE PRINCIPLE OF MAJORITY, DEMOCRATIC RULE. FOLLOWING A REFUTATION OF THE OPPOSITION'S OBJECTIONS TO THE POWERS OF THE PRESIDENT AND TO THE PROTECTION OF INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS, CARAMANLIS REMARKED THAT THE OPPOSITION ENTERED THE DISCUSSION OF THE CONSTITUTION PREJUDICED, LAUNCHING ITS ATTACK ON THE GOVERNMENT DRAFT BEFORE THEY EXAMINED IT AND INTENDING TO CREATE POLITICAL TENSION. PM'S STATEMENT ENDED ON POSITIVE TONE CALLING FOR ALL GREEKS INCLUDING HIS POLITICAL OPPONENTS TO CREATE ESSENTIAL FOUNDATIONS OF DEMOCRACY. HE STRESSED THAT THE PROSPECTS FOR GREECE HAVE NEVER BEEN BETTER AND THROUGH NEW CHARTER GREEK PEOPLE CAN "DEVELOP THEIR VIRTUES AND PROSPER IN FREEDOM AND SAFETY".

4. OPPOSITION LEADER MAVROS (CU/NF) , IN PRESS MEETING AFTER CONSTITUTION WAS APPROVED, CONDEMNED NEW DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNMENT MAJORITY IN PARLIAMENT FOR IGNORING OPPOSITION PROPOSALS. SPECIFICALLY NAVROS MENTIONED LACK OF PROTECTION OF CIVIL RIGHTS OF INDIVIDUALS, OF PRESS FREEDOM, FAILURE TO PROMOTE DEMOCRATIC EDUCATION AND TRADE UNIONISM, AND GRANTING OF EXCESSIVE POWERS TO EXECUTIVE AT EXPENSE OF LEGISLATIVE BRANCH. AFTER LAMENTING THAT CARAMANLIS' SPEECH INDICATED AN ANTI-PARLIAMENTARY MENTALITY OF THE PREMIER WHO INTERPRETED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE "NOVEMBER 17 ELECTIONS AS A CARTE BLANCHE TO RULE AS HE THINKS FIT...", MAVROS REMARKED THAT THE CENTER UNION/ NEW FORCES PARTY WILL LAUNCH A CAMPAIGN TO ENLIGHTEN THE PEOPLE ON THE DANGERS OF THE NEW CONSTITUTION AND WILL PREPARE CERTAIN NEEDED REVISIONS. HOWEVER, MAVROS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION OF NO -RECOGNITION OF THE APPROVED CONSTITUTION WHICH IS VALID; BUT INDICATED THE STRUGGLE FOR ITS REVISION WILL BEGIN IMMEDIATELY.

5. LATER ON JUNE 9 ANDREAS PAPANDREOU (PASOK) HELD PRESS CONFERENCE LAYING OUT PASOK'S VIEWS ON ASPECTS OF NEW CONSTITUTION WITH WHICH PASOK DOES NOT WANT TO BE ASSOCIATED. REFERRING TO NEW CHARTER AS HISTORIC RESPONSIBILITY PAPANDREOU DECLARED PASOK WOULD JOIN IN EFFORT TO ENLIGHTEN GREEK PEOPLE ON DEFECTS OF PRESENT CONSTITUTION AND MANNER FOR ITS REVISION.

6. EDITORIALS IN WEEKEND PRESS WERE WEIGHTED IN FAVOR OF NEW CONSTITUTION, WITH EXCEPTION OF LEFTIST/COMMUNIST NEWSPAPERS. (LIBERAL TO VIMA PREFERRED TO RIDE THE FENCE BY AVOIDING DIRECT COMMENT.) PUBLIC REACTION HAS BEEN PRIMARILY THAT OF SATISFACTION THAT NEW CHARTER HAS NOW BEEN APPROVED AND THUS ADDITIONAL STEP TAKEN TOWARD FULL RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY.

7. MAVROS AS LEADER OF THE LOYAL OPPOSITION WHO DETERMINED THE OPPOSITION'S STRATEGY OF BOYCOTT HAS COME UNDER FIRE FROM SEVERAL SIDES INCLUDING FROM WITHIN HIS OWN PARTY RANKS, SEVERAL CU/NF DEPUTIES, FOR EXAMPLE, WHO CONSIDERED THAT NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY WARRANTED ALL DEPUTIES TAKING PART IN FINAL VOTE. MAVROS HAS ALSO BEEN CRITICIZED THAT BOYCOTT ON CONSTITUTION WAS SMALL-MINDED POLITICAL PLOY WITHOUT REAL JUSTIFICATION PARTICULARLY SINCE ALL OPPOSITION PARTIES WERE REPRESENTED IN PARLIAMENT'S CONSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEE WHICH INITIALLY CONSIDERED THIS DRAFT CHARTER. QUESTION NOW IS WHETHER MAVROS AND OPPOSITION IN GENERAL WILL ACTIVELY PURSUE ASSERTIONS AND WILL PROPOSE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS SOON IN THE FACE OF ND MAJORITY WHICH CAN VOTE DOWN SUCH AMENDMENTS JUST AS EASILY AS IT ADOPTED CONSTITUTION. KUBISCH

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